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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [APER](#) [KSCA](#) [TSPL](#) [OTRA](#) [SENV](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY DUSHANBE REQUESTS EMBASSY SCIENCE FELLOW

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¶1. Embassy Dushanbe requests an Embassy Science Fellow for the proposals below. The projects described below benefit the environment and have a direct effect on the well-being of the people of Tajikistan. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan's impoverished status has directed scientific work towards improving the health and environment sector. Tajikistan's scientific community is open to international cooperation. An Embassy Science Fellow would help strengthen ties with the community, transfer valuable knowledge and skills as well as deliver concrete assistance from the United States.

¶2. Embassy Dushanbe also supports the Central Asia Regional Hub's ESF request from Embassy Tashkent for a specialist to assess national parks and forestry management in the region.

¶3. Proposal 1: Solutions for Water Potability and Water-borne Diseases (EPA):

Embassy Dushanbe requests an Embassy Science Fellow to conduct research on the overall situation and solutions for water potability and water-borne disease in Tajikistan. In Tajikistan, water-borne diarrheal diseases carry great danger for the state and the health of the people. According to available data, (which, notably is insufficient), 74,318 (in 1999) to 66,629 (2003) cases of diarrheal diseases are registered annually. Approximately 80% of these cases are children under 14 years of age. The water supply quality is greatly affected by bad sanitary technical conditions of pump stations and distribution networks, lack of chlorine, coagulants, and a lack of spare parts. In 2001, water analyses in Tajikistan indicate that 35.3 % of the samples did not meet the microbiological standards. The percentage of samples not meeting the microbiological standards was reported to be 30.7 % in 2002. The comparative analysis on gastrointestinal infectious diseases for the last 5 years (1999-2003) has shown that water is the major factor for infectious diseases outbreaks. Moreover, treating diarrheal diseases is expensive, since medical aid is often not sought until the latest stages of the disease, when heavy dehydration requires expensive medicines for the treatment. More than 568,000 or 4.5 % beds per day in the hospitals of the Republic are occupied by patients with diarrhea, which requires a large chunk of the state health budget. Diarrheal diseases have a negative impact on the labor market. No affordable and feasible solutions have been presented to fix this rampant nationwide problem. An EPA Fellow could complete the following activities:

- Investigate the current situation water supply system and water-borne diseases in Tajikistan.
- Create a summary of the current national and international programs in place to ameliorate the problem of water-borne disease.
- Present a concrete action plan for how Tajikistan can take

specific, affordable steps towards improving the supply of potable water and decreasing the frequency of water-borne diarrheal disease in the country.

¶4. Embassy Dushanbe was unable to host an Embassy Science Fellow last year and would like to resubmit the following proposals for reconsideration.

¶5. Proposal 2: Uranium Tailings in Khujand Region (USGS):

Ten uranium tailings sites in the Khujand region in northern Tajikistan store 54 million metric tons of uranium waste. During the Soviet Union, Tajikistan was a source for uranium mining and processing. Tajikistan also has the unfortunate legacy of uranium waste dumped in unsecured locations. The majority of the sites were not properly constructed. Because of this the radioactive waste could possibly contaminate groundwater given an earthquake or flooding of some of the rivers, and there are concerns that contamination has already leached into the groundwater supply, causing many health problems among the local population. A Fellow from USGS could complete the following tasks:

- Take samples of groundwater around uranium tailing sites for a baseline
- Train Tajik scientists in effective monitoring of groundwater contamination
- Examine the public health effects of radioactive waste contamination
- Draft an issue report on the status of radioactive contamination in northern Tajikistan

¶6. Proposal 3: Pest Risk Assessment and Integrated Pest Management (USDA):

Tajikistan's economy depends primarily on agriculture. However, more than 10 years after the fall of the Soviet Union,

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agricultural practices have not been updated and modernized, leading to steady declines in production. Tajiki crops are infested by pests and farmers must resort to pesticides. However, these chemical inputs cause concern because of their lack of long-term sustainability and environmental impact. Tajik farmers are also not well aware of alternate methods of pest control, and often do not plan pests. Post proposes a science fellow with background in pest risk assessment and integrated pest management (IPM) from the USDA to come to Tajikistan for the following activities:

- Work with the Ministry of Agriculture on a pest risk assessment
- Introduce the Ministry of Agriculture to modern pest control methods, such as IPM
- Hold seminars on IPM at the Agricultural University and for the Union of Dekhan Farmers
- Assist post with writing technical reports on the status of Tajik farming.

¶7. Proposal 4: Seismology network and Sarez and Nurek Assessments (USGS):

Tajikistan is a seismically active country without the technology and resources to adequately monitor earthquakes that take place. Lake Sarez, located in the high Pamir mountain range, was created in an earthquake and could inundate much of the country if the natural dam breaks. Additionally, the man-made Nurek Reservoir is essentially located on a major fault line. The Soviets had a seismic monitoring system in Tajikistan that has since crumbled after the fall of the Union. A USGS Science Fellow could complete the following tasks:

- Evaluate the seismic risk associated with Lake Sarez and Nurek Reservoir

-- Examine the old earthquake alert system and make proposals on how to rehabilitate it
-- Conduct seminars at the Academy of Sciences on earthquake planning.

¶8. Additional skills required:

The Fellow must have strong research skills, as well as networking skills. Knowledge of Russian language is strongly preferred in addition to a basic knowledge of and experience working in the former Soviet Union. The Fellow should have strong knowledge of the proposal topics.

¶9. Preferred timeframe for hosting this fellow:

Embassy Dushanbe will be relocating during the summer months of 2006 and requests an Embassy Science Fellow no earlier than September 2006. Post expects the Fellow's work to last one month.

¶10. Proposed housing, office support, and in country travel arrangements:

Post is prepared to provide the Fellow with housing, office space, in-country travel arrangements and logistical support as needed. In addition, Fellows will be able to use the following Embassy services: CLO, security, mail, check cashing, and access to Post Health Unit and recreational association facilities. Post will assist in arranging meetings with appropriate contacts.

¶11. Clearances

Post requests the Fellow have a SBU security clearance at minimum for the one-month duration. The Fellow should obtain all necessary vaccinations and medication prior to travel to Tajikistan.

¶12. Point of Contact:

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